

OXYTOCIN. Edited by R. Caldeyro-Barcia and H. Heller. (Pp. xxiv + 443; illustrated. 100s.) Oxford, London, New York, Paris: Pergamon Press, 1961.

AN ever-increasing volume of research work is being conducted on the physiology of the pregnant human uterus. The research unit started in 1947 by H. Alvarez and R. Caldeyro-Barcia has made notable contributions, and, supported by grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation and with the support of the Government and University of Uruguay, it is now one of the finest research groups in the world. It was to this centre in the beautiful city of Montevideo that both clinical and non-clinical workers came from thirteen countries for a symposium on oxytocin.

If any proof is needed of the wide international front along which science advances it can be supplied here, and further the symposium is an excellent illustration of how workers not only in Uruguay, but throughout Latin America, are in the forefront of scientific advance.

The broad approach includes papers on the general physiology and pharmacology of oxytocin by Heller, Cross, and Pickford of Great Britain, and by van Dyke of the United States. Jung of Freiburg and Csapo of New York discuss membrane potential and tension of uterine strips and conclude that oxytocin acts on cell membranes rather than on the contractile system. An important series of papers from the Montevideo school discuss the action on the pregnant human uterus at different periods of pregnancy as judged both by their elaborate recording systems and clinically. Theobald of Bradford presents an essentially clinically approach. The second half of the book is concerned mainly with the pharmacology of the peptides related to oxytocin, with other oxytocic-like substances, with oxytocinase and with attempts to determine oxytocic substances in the blood. Well-edited discussions follow the papers. Both papers and discussions sometimes assume a very highly specialised and technical aspect, and few readers will follow the whole presentation, but the record will be of some interest to medical readers and is a worthy record of what to the participants must have been a most stimulating conference.

J. E. M.

CONCEPTS OF MEDICINE. Edited by Brandon Lush, M.D., M.R.C.P. (Pp. x + 286. 50s.) Oxford, London, New York, Paris: Pergamon Press, 1961.

THIS is a collection of addresses which have appeared in various journals, British and American, but often in the *Lancet* and mostly in the period 1950-1958. The editor aims to provide in small compass a counter to the specialisation in outlook engendered by our educational system, and has certainly provided a stimulus to wider thinking beyond the immediate demands of the medical curriculum. It may be doubted if those whose need is greatest will read it, but that is their loss. Admittedly it is not all easy reading and some of the addresses may appeal more to teachers than to those who have been recently taught.

The studies are grouped into "Concepts of Medicine" where the teaching and practice of medicine and collaboration with non-medical workers are discussed, and into "Concepts of Health and Disease" where five lectures discuss the concepts of health and of disease, of homeostasis, of essential hypertension, and the regulation of body temperature. In a third section "Concepts of Medical Research" are discussed, including the selection of research scientists, clinical evaluation of remedies and the place of the research institute.

Only a few addresses should be read at one sitting. Much of the ground has been traversed before, but many of the addresses by the skilful development of their theme and felicity of their expression will give much pleasure.

STEDMAN'S MEDICAL DICTIONARY. Prepared by twenty-three consulting editors and thirty-four associate editors. Twentieth Golden Jubilee Edition. (Pp. 1,728; pls. 31. 110s.) London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, Ltd., 1961.

THIS work has always been one of the standard medical dictionaries. This complete revision and resetting in new type will establish it more firmly than ever. The very great improvement in format and in ease of reference can perhaps best be appreciated by comparing it with an earlier edition. The type is of quite exceptional clarity. A dictionary which has gone